



Contact: Cathy Taylor / Kelsey Moorhouse  
Cathy Taylor Public Relations, Inc.  
Cathy@cathytaylorpr.com  
773-564-9564

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble presents  
the Midwest Premiere of  
*Dry Land*  
by Ruby Rae Spiegel  
Directed by RTE Member Hallie Gordon  
Featuring Jessica Ervin and Bryce Gangel**

**April 22 – May 28, 2016**

Chicago, IL—**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble (RTE)**, Chicago’s only Equity theatre dedicated to producing new work with women at the core, announces the midwest premiere of ***Dry Land* by Ruby Rae Spiegel**. The production, directed by RTE member **Hallie Gordon**, runs **April 22 – May 28, 2016**, at **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago**. The press opening is Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at 7:00pm.

Sometimes high school boils down to one thing - survival. And the only way to stay afloat is to find yourself an ally...

Set in the girls' locker room of a Florida high school, Ruby Rae Spiegel's ferocious new play looks at the unlikely friendship between Esther and Amy, two high school swimmers under uncommon pressure. Called a "remarkable new play" by *The New York Times*, *Dry Land* is alternately harrowing and hilarious, as it homes in on the issue of DIY abortion, the complexities of female friendship, and the impossible pressures that build up at the brink of adulthood.

Artistic Director **Tara Mallen** comments, "*Dry Land* is the second production in RTE's 2016 "The Body Politic" season consisting of three important new plays in which the political is deeply personal. The play begins with two teenage girls attempting a do-it-yourself abortion. It is a precarious subject, rife with shame and secrecy, not to mention being a political time bomb. The play doesn't pick sides or ask you to pick sides -- it simply reflects a growing reality, particularly for women and girls living in areas where it is now most difficult to get abortions. In the midst of this election circus, as we sift through the candidate's policies and platforms, *Dry Land* tackles this hot button issue with extreme truth - and a great dose of humor -- engendering an imperative dialogue about women's bodies in this crucible of politics."

"What struck me the first time I read *Dry Land*, this expertly written play by the young Ruby Rae Spiegel, was how unbelievably real, how lively and true and recognizable these characters were," comments director **Hallie Gordon**. "While the play has at its center a harrowing and dramatic incident, what matters about the play is not its plot, but its themes – at its heart, this is a work about friendship. The play asks how we are connected, and how we conduct ourselves when that connection is tested."

*Dry Land* features **Jessica Ervin** as “Ester” and **Bryce Gangel** as “Amy” with **Charlotte Thomas, Matt Farrabee, Ric Walker, Olivia Shine** and **Ireon Roach**. The design team includes **Joanna Iwanicka** (scenic design), **Charles Cooper** (lighting design), **Janice Pytel** (costume design), **Sarah Putts** (sound) and **David Blixt** (fight choreography).

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**Ruby Rae Spiegel** (Playwright) is a graduate of Yale University. Her Susan Smith Blackburn Prize nominated play, *DRY LAND*, premiered Off-Broadway in 2014 in a sold-out, critically acclaimed run at Colt Coeur, following development in New York Stage and Film’s Powerhouse Theater Readings Festival and the Ojai Playwrights Conference. Her play *Carrie & Francine* premiered in the Summer Shorts Festival in 2011 at 59E59 alongside work by Neil LaBute and Christopher Durang. Dubbed “the prodigy of Summer Shorts” by the Theatre Development Fund, she received a rave review in the *The New York Times* for the piece and won Stephen Sondheim’s Young Playwrights Inc.’s National Competition (her second consecutive win after 2010’s *All Ye Know*). Ruby currently writes for Netflix’s forthcoming original series “The OA.”

**Hallie Gordon** (Director) is an RTE member and Artistic Producer at Steppenwolf and Artistic Director of Steppenwolf Young Adults. As a theatre artist Hallie has directed for Rivendell, *Eat Your Heart Out*, *Eclipsed* at Northlight Theatre, for Steppenwolf 1984, *Animal Farm*, *Leveling Up*, the world premiere of *The Book Thief*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, the world premiere of a new adaptation by Tanya Saracho of *The House on Mango Street*, and *Harriet Jacobs*, adapted for the stage by Lydia R. Diamond. A new premier of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, also adapted by Lydia R. Diamond, which won a Black Excellence Award from the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago. This production also transferred Off-Broadway to The New Victory Theatre. She has directed staged readings for The Goodman Theatre, Timeline Theatre, Chicago Dramatists and Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Hallie is the recipient of The Helen Coburn Meier & Tim Meier Achievement Award

**Jessica Ervin** (Ester) is a recent graduate of Ball State University with a B.F.A. in Acting. Her Chicago credits include Walkabout Theater Company’s *Summer in the Parks* production of *The Wild*, The Public House Theatre’s *12 Ways to Play Festival*, Collaboracion’s final *Sketchbook Festival*, and understudying Rivendell’s touring production of *WOMEN AT WAR*. Some of her other favorite projects are *The Skriker* (Josie), *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet), and *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (Tillie).

**Bryce Gangel** (Amy) makes her Rivendell Theatre debut. Recent Chicago credits include: The U.S. premiere of *Posh* (Steep Theatre); *Between You, Me, and the Lampshade* (Teatro Vista); *All American* (Redtwist Theatre); the Chicago premiere of *Hank Williams: Lost Highway* (Filament Theatre Ensemble); and *You Never Can Tell* (Remy Bumppo Theatre U/S). She has appeared on television in “Crisis” (NBC). Bryce is a graduate of Loyola University and The School at Steppenwolf. She is proudly represented by Paonessa Talent.

**Title:** *Dry Land*  
**Written by:** Ruby Rae Spiegel  
**Directed by:** RTE Member Hallie Gordon  
**Featuring:** Jessica Ervin and Bryce Gangel

**Previews:** **April 22 – 23, 2016**  
Friday, April 22 at 8:00pm  
Saturday, April 23 at 8:00pm  
Sunday, April 24 at 4:00pm with Creative Dramatics Class offered  
*For an additional \$5 Rivendell teaching artists will provide a creative dramatics class during the show for ages 6-12. This will take place next door in our rehearsal/reception space at 5775 N. Ridge. The class is open to families with an adult watching that performance of Dry Land.*

Tuesday, April 26 at 8:00pm

**Press opening:** **Wednesday, April 27, 2016 at 7:00pm**

**VIP Opening:** Thursday, April 28 at 7:00pm  
**Regular run:** April 29 – May 28, 2016

**Schedule:** Thursdays-Saturdays at 8:00pm  
Saturdays at 4:00pm  
Town Hall Discussions will follow the Saturday matinees on May 7, 14 and 21

**Location:** Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago

**Tickets:** **General Admission**  
Previews: \$25  
Pre-sale: \$32  
Walk-up: \$35  
**Student, Senior, Active Military, Veteran**  
Preview: \$15  
Pre-sale: \$22  
Walk-up: \$25

**Pay What You Can:** Five seats (10% of the house) are available for each performance. Reservations are made on a first come first served basis.

**Flex Pass: \$110 (\$80 for Student/ Senior/ Active Military/ Veteran)**  
Includes four tickets to use in any combination for the season.

**Box Office:** (773) 334-7728 or [www.RivendellTheatre.org](http://www.RivendellTheatre.org)

**Parking and Transportation:** Free parking is available in the Senn High School parking lot (located a block and a half from the theatre behind the school off Thorndale Avenue). There is limited paid and free street parking in the area and the theatre is easily accessible via the Clark (#22) or Broadway (#36) bus and is a short walk from the Bryn Mawr Red Line El station.

### **Notes of Interest**

- *Dry Land* debuted Off Off Broadway in September 2014 at HERE to rave reviews. The play is making its Midwest Premiere at Rivendell.
- Director Hallie Gordon is RTE's newest Ensemble Member.
- *Dry Land* is the second show of the 2016 season. The season will conclude with *Grizzly Mama* by George Brant, directed by RTE member Rachel Walshe will play September 10-October 8, 2016.
- Rivendell fills an important role in the Chicago region as the only Equity theater dedicated to producing artistically challenging and original plays created by and about women.

### **About Rivendell Theatre Ensemble**

Founded in 1994, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble advances women's lives through the power of theatre. Rivendell cultivates the talents of women artists -- writers, actors, directors, designers and technicians -- by seeking out innovative plays that explore unique female experiences and producing them in intimate, salon environments.

Rivendell fills an important role in the Chicago region as the *only* Equity theatre dedicated to producing artistically challenging and original plays created by and about women. After years of being an itinerant company, we moved into our own theater space in 2010 in Edgewater. As new members of the neighborhood, we are focused on becoming an integral community partner and serving as a catalyst to engage our audiences in a discussion of local social issues.

For more information about Rivendell Theater Ensemble, <http://rivendelltheatre.org>. Follow RTE on Facebook at [Facebook.com/rivendelltheatre](https://www.facebook.com/rivendelltheatre) and on Twitter @RivendellThtr

**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble** is supported by generous grants from The Alphawood Foundation; The Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development; The Chicago Community Trust; The Chicago Foundation for Women; The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; The MacArthur Funds for Arts and Culture at The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; The Reva and David Logan Foundation; The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust; Cultural Outreach Program Grant

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